

## ABSTRACT

The invention relates to fluorescent dyes. More particularly, the invention relates to fluorescent cyanine dyes, and especially to water soluble fluorescent cyanine dyes that contain additional sites for attachment to biomolecules. The invention provides a group of novel, water soluble fluorescent cyanine dyes that have distinct fluorescence characteristics that permit their use in any assay or method suited to water soluble fluorescent dyes, and especially to assays requiring a plurality of distinguishable fluorescent markers. The invention further relates to nucleotides, nucleosides, polynucleotides and polypeptides labeled with novel fluorescent cyanine dyes according to the invention, and methods of using them.